

Message Text

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S E C R E T MBFR VIENNA 0131

EXDIS

DEPT PASS DEFENSE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJ: MBFR: SOVIET POSITION ON ARMAMENT REDUCTIONS

REF: MBFR VIENNA 0111 (EXDIS)

1. IN BRIEF DISCUSSION WITH SOVIET DEPREP SHUSTOV ON MARGIN OF MARCH 17 PLENARY, US DEPREP ASKED ABOUT THE APPARENT CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE REMARKS OF SOVIET REP TARASOV TO US REPS ON MARCH 10 (MBFR VIENNA 0111) THAT THE EASTERN PROPOSAL OF FEBRUARY 19, 1976 SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS PROPOSING ONLY THE REDUCTION OF THE FIVE TYPES OF ARMAMENTS SPECIFIED IN THAT PROPOSAL, THAT IS, TANKS; NUCLEAR-CAPABLE AIRCRAFT; OPERATIONAL-TACTICAL MISSILE LAUNCHERS; NUCLEAR WARHEADS; AND AIR-DEFENSE GUIDED MISSILES; AND THE FOURTH PARAGRAPH OF THE EASTERN FEBRUARY 1976 PROPOSAL, WHICH STATES QUOTE THE REDUCTION OF FORCES IS TO BE EFFECTED BY ENTIRE MILITARY SUB-UNITS, UNITS AND OTHER FORMATIONS TOGETHER WITH THE CORRESPONDING ARMAMENTS AND COMBAT EQUIPMENT...UNQUOTE. US DEPREP SAID THAT THIS FOURTH SUBSTANTIVE PARAGRAPH OF FEBRUARY 1976 PROPOSAL APPEARED TO INDICATE THAT WITHDRAWN UNITS SHOULD WITHDRAW ALL OF THEIR ARMAMENTS AND NOT ONLY THE FIVE TYPES SPECIFIED

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IN THE SECOND PARAGRAPH OF THE FEBRUARY 1976 PROPOSAL.

2. SOVIET DEPREP AGREED THAT THIS WAS THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION, THAT IS, THAT PARAGRAPH FOUR OF THE FEBRUARY 1976 PROPOSAL DID FORESEE THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL UNIT ARMAMENTS AND NOT ONLY OF THE FIVE SPECIFIED TYPES. RATHER UNCONVINCINGLY, SOVIET DEPREP CLAIMED THAT THE FEBRUARY 1976 PROPOSAL HAD BEEN

DRAFTED IN THIS WAY SO AS TO OFFER A CHOICE TO THE WEST BETWEEN RECIPROCAL REDUCTION OF THE FIVE SPECIFIED TYPES OR WITHDRAWAL OF UNITS WITH ALL THEIR ARMAMENTS. SHUSTOV INDICATED THAT THIS CHOICE CONTINUED OPEN, ALTHOUGH HE SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENT TIME WAS SUITABLE FOR SPECIFIC DISCUSSION OF ARMAMENT REDUCTIONS. HE ALSO COMMENTED HOWEVER THAT THE EAST WAS INTERESTED IN CONTINUING ITS DISCUSSION OF GENERAL SUBJECTS IN THE INFORMALS AND THAT DATA DISCUSSION SHOULD NOT MONOPOLIZE THE VIENNA TALKS.

3. FRG REP BEHRENDT HAS REPORTED TO US DEPREP A RELATED SHORT EXCHANGE WITH SOVIET REP TARASOV WHICH TOOK PLACE ON MARCH 15. BEHRENDT TOLD TARASOV THAT THE EAST'S REQUIREMENT THAT IN A FIRST STAGE AGREEMENT WESTERN EUROPEAN AND CANADIAN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS COMMIT THEMSELVES ON QUOTE SCOPE AND TIMING UNQUOTE OF THEIR STAGE TWO REDUCTIONS WAS A DEVICE FOR GAINING ACCEPTANCE OF THE EAST'S POSITION THAT ALL DIRECT PARTICIPANTS SHOULD REDUCE ALL ARMAMENTS ACROSS THE BOARD. TARASOV REPLIED THAT THE WORD QUOTE SCOPE UNQUOTE IN THE EAST'S PROPOSAL FOR STAGE TWO COMMITMENTS WOULD CONTINUE TO MEAN BOTH MEN AND ARMAMENTS UNTIL THE WEST SHOWED SOME FLEXIBILITY ON ITS PROPOSAL THAT THE SOVIETS WITHDRAW AN ENTIRE TANK ARMY WITH ALL ITS ARMAMENTS. RESOR

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